Dress Sock Providing Health and Appearance

Cross-Reference to Related Application

This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/418,438, filed on October 15, 2002, which is incorporated herein by reference.

Technical Field

The present invention generally relates to dress socks and, more particularly, dress socks that are designed to safeguard an individual's health and provide comfort when worn.

Background

Professionals, businessmen, and uniformed services generally must wear dark socks to match their business suits or professional uniforms. Dark socks are also used for formal wear. Dark colored socks are worn with formal dress for purposes of maintaining a formal appearance when such socks become visible, for example, when an individual sits and/or crosses his/her legs.

Dark dress socks are generally made of a dyed synthetic material such as polyester or nylon, for example. The dyed synthetic material is in direct contact with the skin of the toes and the entire foot. When enclosed in a shoe, a person's body heat and perspiration can create or exacerbate unhealthy foot conditions, such as development of fungi between and on top of the toes and under the toe nails, offensive odor, athletes foot and other infections.

White cotton socks are generally recommended by foot specialists to lessen the risk of developing the above mentioned foot conditions. Indeed, socks that are made of white cotton fiber allow the foot to breathe, creating a healthy and comfortable environment for the toes and the entire foot. However, wearing white cotton socks would mar the appearance of a person wearing formal or business attire.

Summary of Invention

Exemplary embodiments of the invention include dress socks that are designed to safeguard an individual's health and provide comfort when worn. Further, exemplary embodiments of the invention include dress socks that are designed to appear as formal dress socks when worn, while providing comfort and safeguarding an individual's health.

More specifically, in one exemplary embodiment of the invention, a sock comprises: a first portion formed of a first material that provides a formal appearance when the sock is worn; and a second portion formed of a second material that safeguards against unhealthy foot conditions, wherein the second portion is made to cover at least an entire toe portion and bottom portion of a person's foot when the sock is worn.

In another exemplary embodiment, the second portion is made to substantially encapsulate the entire foot when the sock is worn.

In other exemplary embodiments of the invention, the first material may be made of, e.g., mercerized cotton, synthetic materials, or colored materials.

In yet other exemplary embodiments of the invention, the second material may be made of, e.g., a cotton material such as white cotton material, or other materials that safeguard an individual's health by, e.g., lessening the risk of developing and/or exacerbating unhealthy foot conditions such as fungus growth, etc.

In other exemplary embodiments of the invention, the first and second portions of the sock are seamlessly connected (e.g., the first and second materials may be integrally woven to each other) and/or the second material has substantially the same thickness as the first material.

In yet another exemplary embodiment of the invention, the first material comprises an elastic component.

These and other exemplary embodiments, aspects, features and advantages of the present invention will be described or become apparent from the following detailed description of exemplary embodiments, which is to be read in connection with the accompanying drawing.

Brief Description of the Drawing

The Figure illustrates a dress sock according to an exemplary embodiment of the invention.

Detailed Description of Exemplary Embodiments

Exemplary embodiments of the invention include dress socks that are designed to safeguard an individual's health and provide comfort when worn. Further, exemplary embodiments of the invention include dress socks that are designed to appear as formal dress socks when worn, while providing comfort and safeguarding an individual's health. It is to be understood that the term "formal appearance" as used in connection with the following detailed description and in the claims is to be broadly construed as referring to any type of formal and/or dressy appearance.

The Figure illustrates a dress sock **(1)** according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. In particular, the Figure illustrates the dress sock **(1)** as donned by an individual. The dress sock **(1)** comprises a first portion **(1a)** made of a material that provides a formal appearance of a formal or dress sock, and a second portion **(1b)** made of a material that provides comfort and protects health.

More specifically, in exemplary embodiments of the invention, the first portion **(1a)** of the dress sock **(1)** is formed of a colored (dyed) material that provides a formal appearance. The first portion **(1a)** may be formed of any suitable material such as mercerized cotton or synthetic material such as polyester, nylon, etc. The first portion **(1a)** may include any textured weave or design pattern as desired. The first portion **(1a)** may be made of a material that comprises a gentle stretch component (some degree of elasticity) to provide mild support to the leg muscles, reducing leg fatigue and to prevent the sock **(1)** from slipping down the leg.

In the exemplary embodiment depicted in the Figure, the first portion **(1a)** covers a bottom portion of an individual's leg **(2)** below the knee and the individual's calf **(3)** and extends down to past the individual's ankle **(4)** and covers a portion of the top of the individual's instep **(8)**. The exemplary embodiment depicted in the Figure illustrates a 3/4-length over-the-calf sock **(1)**. In other exemplary embodiments of the invention, dress socks may be ankle-length dress socks of various sizes, wherein the first portion **(1a)** extends upwardly from just slightly over the ankle **(4)** to some lower region of the leg **(2)** and calf **(3)**.

As noted above, the second portion **(1b)** of the dress sock **(1)** is designed using a material that provides health and comfort. In one exemplary embodiment, the second portion **(1b)** is formed of a cotton material. The second portion **(1b)** may comprise a white cotton material. It is to be understood that the second portion **(1b)** of the sock **(1)** may be formed of any material, whether colored or non-colored, which is known to protect against unhealthy foot conditions and provide comfort.

Further, in one exemplary embodiment of the invention as depicted in the Figure, the second portion **(1b)** of the dress sock **(1)** is designed to substantially encapsulate the entire foot **(6)** of the individual. In particular, as shown in the Figure, the second portion **(1b)** completely covers and surrounds a toe portion **(7)**, a bottom portion **(9)** and a heal portion **(5)** and side portions **(10)** of the individual's foot **(6)**. Further, as depicted in the Figure, the second portion **(1b)** extends from the toe portion **(7)** to the instep portion **(8)** such that the second portion **(1b)** covers some lower region of the instep **(8)**.

With conventional dress socks made of dyed and/or synthetic materials, most infections, odors, fungi between and on top of the toes, athlete's feet and other ailments can be caused and/or exacerbated by direct contact with such dyed and/or synthetic materials, which do not absorb perspiration and/or allow the skin to breathe. In contrast, a sock according to an embodiment of the invention having the second portion **(1b)** made of healthfriendly material (e.g., white cotton), which substantially covers the individual's foot **(6)**, including the toe portion **(7)** and other portions of the foot **(6)**, will safeguard an individual's health by lessening the risk of developing and/or exacerbating unhealthy foot conditions such as fungus growth.

In one exemplary embodiment of the invention, the second region **(1b)** encapsulates as much of the foot **(6)** as possible, but no more than that which would cause the second portion **(1b)** of the sock **(1)** to be visible when the individual is wearing shoes.

In other exemplary embodiments of the invention, the second portion **(1b)** may cover the various portions of the foot **(6)** to lesser degrees, but no less than that which would effectively eliminate health-protection benefits.

Furthermore, in one exemplary embodiment, the first portion **(1a)** and second portion **(1b)** of the sock **(1)** are seamlessly connected. For example, the first and second portions **(1a)** and **(1b)** can be integrally woven to each other using techniques known to those of ordinary skill in the art. A seamless connection between the first and second portions **(1a)** and **(1b)** prevents the sock **(1)** from having bulky seams that can cause irritation or discomfort to the individual due to, e.g., the seam forcibly pressing against the foot **(6)** when a shoe is worn by the individual.

Furthermore, in another embodiment of the invention, the second portion **(1b)** is made of a relatively thin material, having the same or substantially the same thickness of the material of the first portion **(1a)**. More specifically, it is preferable for the second material of the second portion **(1b)** to be relatively thin, as opposed to being thick and bulky which is not suitable when wearing dress shoes, for example.

As described above, exemplary embodiments of the invention include dress socks that provide a formal appearance (formal, dressy, etc.) while safeguarding against unhealthy foot conditions that can result from having dyed, chemically treated and/or synthetic materials in direct contact with the skin of the toes, heel and other portions of the foot.

Although exemplary embodiments of the invention have been described herein with reference to the accompanying Figure, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the precise embodiments described herein, and that various other changes and modifications may be affected therein by one skilled in the art without departing form the scope or spirit of the invention.

All such changes and modifications are intended to be included within the scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.